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ABSTRACT

For more than 400 years the ancestors of the Mexican American have contributed to the spiritual and material wealth of this land, yet recognition of their cultural and national rights has been slow to come. Like the American Indians, Chicanos can claim, "We did not come to America, America came to us". As a conquered people, they have been repressed by the dominant society. Mexican Americans can trace their ancestry back to the Spanish conquistadores who subjugated the Aztec. From the blending of the two cultures came the Mestizo population. It was the Mestizos and Mexicans, rather than the Spaniards, who settled the American Southwest; but most of the millions of acres of rich lands granted by the Spanish Land Grants were lost after the U.S. victory in the Mexican American War. Some Mexican Americans worked as laborers on the large farms or ranches; others migrated to the cities and settled in the barrios. From within the barrios has come the growth of the Chicano movement, which protests against the status quo and its social institutions and seeks to establish Mexican Americans as part of the social and political structure of the nation. Mexican Americans today number between 7 to 12 million and will soon be the largest minority in America. Their future depends on how they define their national identity and the direction they choose to take as a national minority. It also depends on how the nation itself chooses to define the political and constitutional union that binds our culturally pluralistic people together. (DS)

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THE MEXICAN AMERICANS

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MINORITY RIGHTS GROUP

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- To secure justice for minority or majority groups suffering discrimination, by investigating their situation and publicising the facts as widely as possible, to educate and alert public opinion throughout the world.
- To help prevent, through publicity about violations of human rights, such problems from developing into dangerous and destructive conflicts which, when polarised, are very difficult to resolve; and
- To foster, by its research findings, international understanding of the factors which create prejudiced treatment and group tensions, thus helping to promote the growth of a world conscience regarding human rights.

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ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY Jackie Johnson

OFFICE
Benjamin Franklin House
36 Craven Street
London WC2N 5NG
01-930 6659

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THE MEXICAN AMERICANS

by Stan Steiner

'For a long time I've worried about the attitude towards Mexicans in California and States along the border. These riots have roots in things which happened long before.'
– Eleanor Roosevelt

'. . . in those days, the public both in the South and the whole of the West, together with a considerable portion of the public elsewhere, was hoodwinked by such methods as were used and actually supposed our acquisition of the new territory to be a God-fearing act, the result of the aggression and of the sinful impotence of our Spanish neighbours, together with our own justifiable energy and our devotion to the cause of freedom. It is to be hoped that this lesson, showing us as it does how much of conscience and even of personal sincerity can co-exist with a minimum of effective morality in international undertakings, will some day be once more remembered; so that when our nation is another time about to serve the devil, it will do so with more frankness and will deceive itself less by half-conscious cant. For the rest, our mission in the cause of liberty is to be accomplished through a steadfast devotion to the cause of our own inner life, and not by going abroad as missionaries, as conquerors or as marauders, among weaker peoples.'
– Josiah Royce, *California, a Study of American Character, 1886*

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From the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 10th December 1948:

Article 1
All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2
Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 10
Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 19
Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20
(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

(2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

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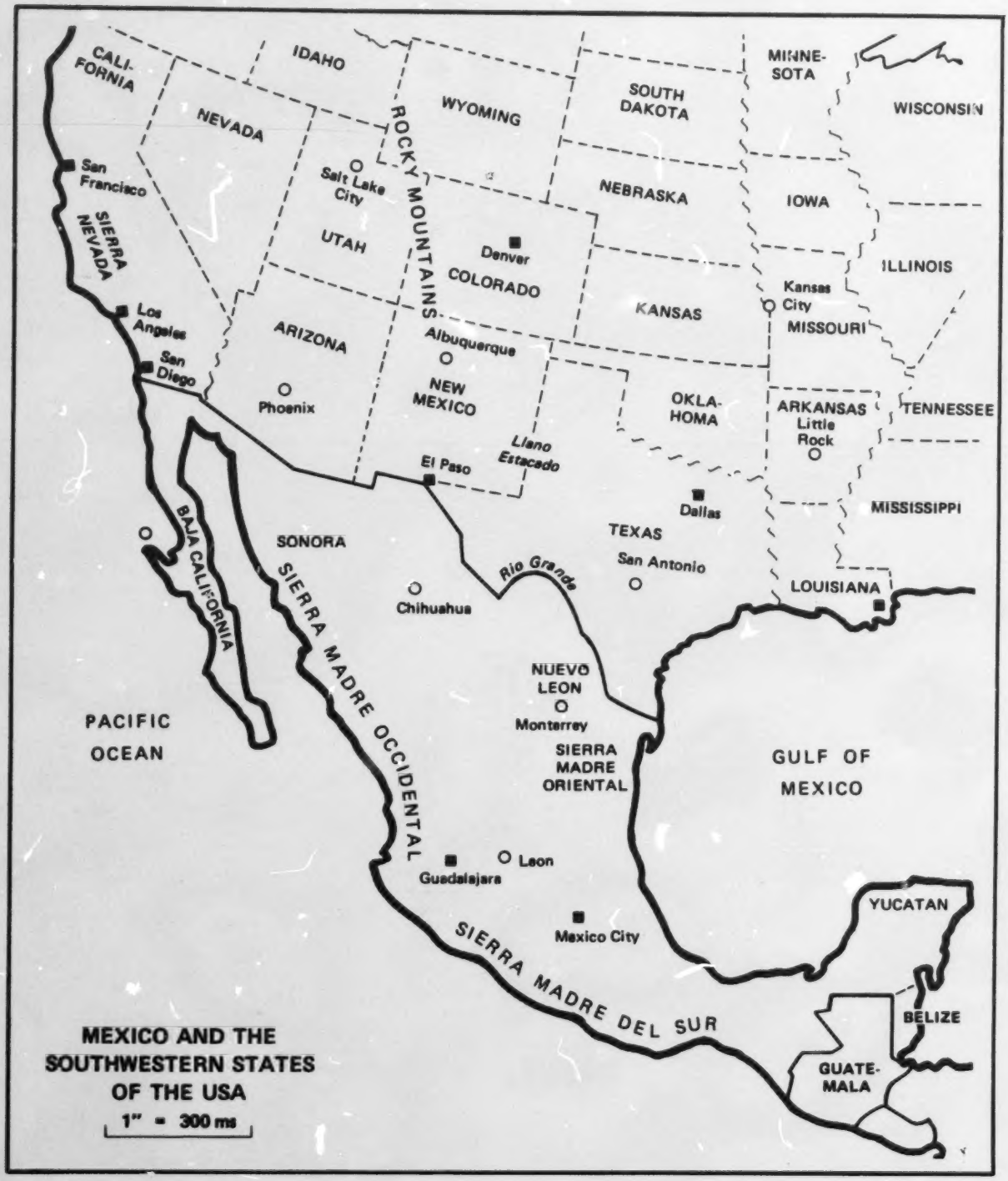
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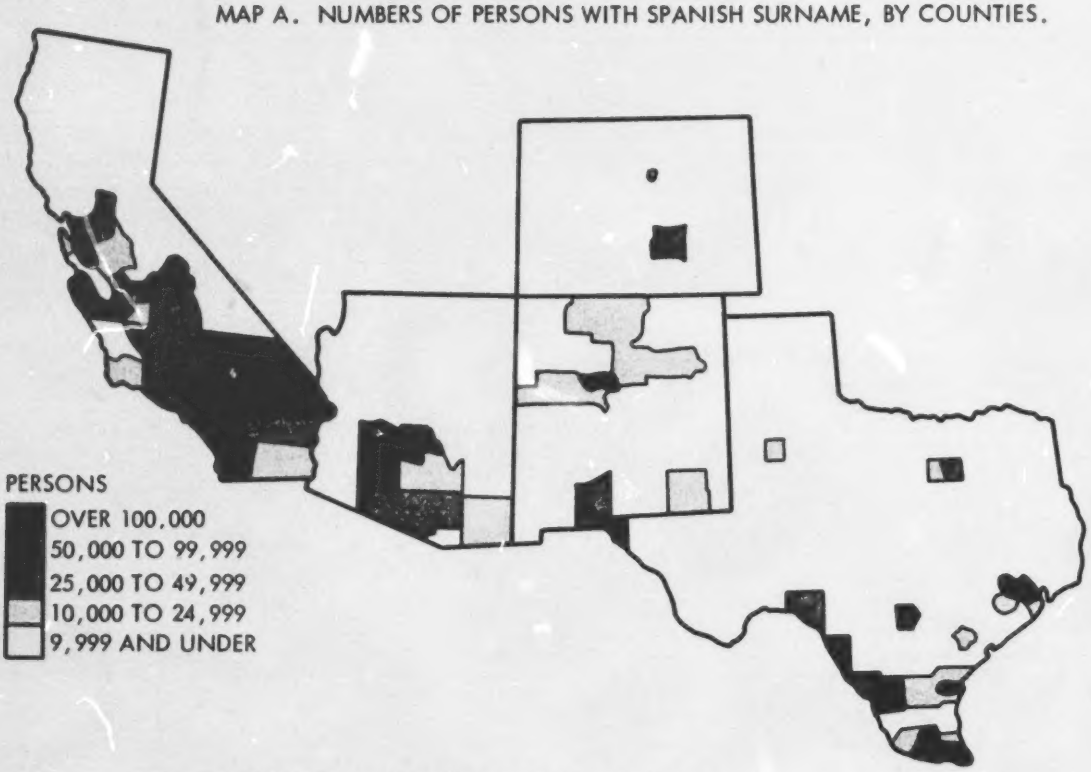
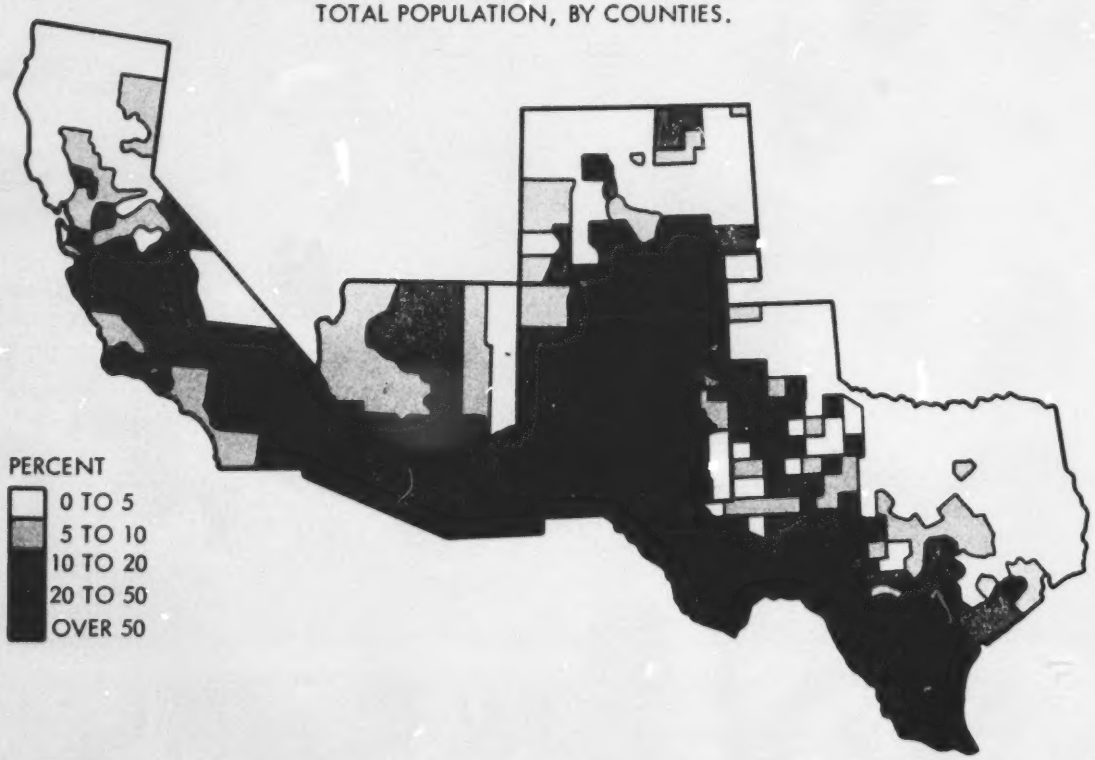
OF THE USA
1" = 300 mi

MAP A. NUMBERS OF PERSONS WITH SPANISH SURNAME, BY COUNTIES.



Source: *1960 U.S. Census of Population*, PC(2)–1B, table 15.

MAP B. PERSONS WITH SPANISH SURNAME AS PERCENT OF THE TOTAL POPULATION, BY COUNTIES.



Source: *1960 U.S. Census of Population*, PC(2)–1B, table 15; vol. I, parts 4, 6, 7, 33, and 45, table 28.

Introduction

For more than one hundred years the Mexican Americans were the 'Forgotten People'. In their rural villages and *barrios* of the southwestern United States they lived in isolation, separated from the mainstream of the nation. Life changed slowly, if at all, from generation to generation. And though they were often the majority of the population, from Texas to California, they neither received, nor demanded, recognition. It was the country of '*poco tiempo*', said one writer, the country of 'pretty soon'. Even a generation ago very little had changed. When the 1940 edition of his history *Forgotten People* was to be reprinted in 1967, the dean of Mexican-American historians George I. Sanchez poignantly noted, 'mine are still the forgotten people. *Paso por aqui*'. They are 'the stepchildren of the nation'.

Suddenly it seems as if all this has changed. The cover of *Time* magazine announces, 'Hispanic Americans: Soon The Biggest Minority', while another magazine proclaims, 'The Decade of The *Chicano*, California's Third World Majority'. The Governor of California tells a political meeting of Mexican Americans, 'You're the leading minority in the Southwest. It's your turn in the sun', while the President of the United States declares a National Hispanic Heritage Week.

The recognition of the *Chicanos*, as many Mexican Americans prefer to be known, appears to be largely statistical. Some 19 million people of 'Hispanic', or Latin, heritage are now estimated by the government to live in the United States. For the past five years their population has 'officially' increased by 14.3% making them not merely the fastest growing minority, but perhaps within the next decade the largest minority as well, surpassing the Blacks in numbers, if not influence.

Of these peoples the largest single group are the Mexican Americans. The government's statistics show 7.2 million citizens of Mexican heritage and as many 'illegals' – those who work in the United States but who maintain Mexican citizenship. Though the statistics offered by the federal authorities often have underestimated, and have been held suspect by Mexican American leaders – for many reasons – they do give an indication of the growth* and locale of this population (Census, 1976):

California	3,348,000
Texas	2,557,000
New Mexico	420,000
Arizona	350,000
Colorado	278,000

Most of the Mexican Americans live in the five southwestern States. However, as migrant farmworkers they have spread from the Pacific coast to the Eastern seaboard. In the harvest season this migrant population of Ohio and Michigan may be as great as that of Colorado or Arizona, and the population in the Mexican American *barrios* of Chicago is greater than that of Albuquerque or Phoenix. So great is the growth of the Mexican American communities that Raul Yzaquirre, of the National Council of *La Raza* (The Race) has optimistically predicted: 'The 1980s will be the decade of the Hispanics'.

In spite of this growing presence the statistical recognition of the people is far from being equalled by any political recognition. Of the 20,000 elected officials in California, for instance, the 'Hispanics' who are 15.8% of the population hold barely 2% of the offices. And there is not one Governor in the Southwest, or in the entire nation, of Mexican American descent. On a national level the situation is little better. In the Congress there are four Mexican Americans representing more than 7 million people. There is not a single Senator or Cabinet officer. And merely 3.4% of ordinary government jobs are held by 'Hispanics', compared to 16% held by Blacks.

No people in the country, proportionate to its numbers, is more under-represented in the institutions of government and commerce than the Mexican Americans. If the government's statistical predictions of a growing population are accurate, this may soon lead to an equally severe and growing paradox.

Some of the reasons given for the low status of the Mexican Americans echo a familiar litany: lack of formal education (one quarter of the people have received less than five years of schooling, compared to 3.6% of the rest of the population); political apathy (voter registration is only 37.7% compared to 66.7% for the rest of the population); and the usual burdens of poverty (disease, crime, poor housing and malnutrition are all higher in the *barrios* than for the rest of the population).† There is no one unique explanation. They are self-evident truths. However, like the statistical rediscovery of the potential importance of the Mexican Americans, they describe the obvious. And they offer little insight into the unique cultural and historical presence of the people of *La Raza*, without which any understanding of neither their past, nor their future, can be comprehended.

As George I. Sanchez had written: the Mexican American was 'forgotten', in large part, due to the ignorance of the rest of the nation. That ignorance still persists.

* cf. 1960 Census figures of 3.8 million Mexican Americans (and 18.9m. Blacks, 0.9m. Puerto Ricans, 0.5m. U.S. Indians, 0.4m. Japanese Americans, and 0.2m. Chinese Americans).

† The Mexican American Student Leadership Conference: 'Protest the injustices being committed upon Mexican Americans in the United States.

1. Unjust treatment of Reies Tijerina who was trying to recover lands that have been stolen from Mexican Americans in the Southwest by Anglos. *2.* 45% of Mexican Americans eligible for the draft are being drafted, while *only 19%* of Anglos eligible for the draft are drafted!! *3.* 20% of casualties in Viet Nam are Mexican American, whose families are still living in poverty and deprivation. *4.* 65% of students in mentally retarded programs in Santa Ana are Mexican Americans due not to actual retardation but to the failure of the Anglo educational system which is not geared to meet the needs of bilingual children of the Mexican-American Culture. *5.* Mexican American farm workers and migrant workers in the Southwest are subject to exploitation because they are not covered by Social Security, Unemployment Compensation and other benefits. *6.* The drop-out rate among Mexican American high school students in the Southwest is 60% which again indicates the failure of the Anglo educational system when dealing with Mexican American students. *7.* The average educational level of Mexican Americans in the United States is 8.6 years, which is 4 years below the national average. *8.* Only 2% of Mexican Americans are in college, again way below the national average. *9.* And finally, discrimination in employment and housing.

Part One:

THE MAKING OF MESTIZOS

In Mexico, the day that Christopher Columbus sighted land in the New World is not celebrated as Columbus Day. As elsewhere in Latin American it is *El Día de la Raza* (The Day of The Race); it marks the beginning of *La Raza*, the making of the *Mestizos* who were to be the ancestors of the Mexican Americans. Though the bitter conflict of cultures is more often recognized, the bittersweet mating of cultures was perhaps even more profound and enduring.

When the Spanish soldiers and the Mexican natives 'discovered' one another they were both equally awed – though for very different reasons. On entering Mexico City, the capital of the Aztec empire, Cortez and his conquistadors were amazed to see, as he said, a city as large as Seville, with a market-place twice the size of that of Salamanca. The chronicler of the expedition, Father Bernal Diaz del Castillo, was even more impressed; he described the city as being as magnificent as Constantinople and Rome. More than anything else it was this beauty and wealth of the Indians that captivated the Spaniards. And they sought physically to embrace and conquer both.

The native Indians, for their part, believed the men on horseback were messengers from the gods. Prophets had told of the coming of bearded, white-skinned men, from the East, who would demand from them expurgation and punishment for their sins. Even as they fought these strangers they knew they would have to succumb before the judgement of the heavens. So the Emperor Motecuhzoma welcomed Cortez: 'O, you have come back to us; you have come down from the sky. Rest now, and take possession of your royal houses. Welcome to your lands, My Lords'; while in the temples the Tlamatinimes, the Wise Men, intoned:

> Now, we know it is true
> that we must perish,
> for we are mortal men.
> You, Giver of Life,
> you have ordained it.

Thus, what was an imperial conquest to some, was a spiritual conquest to the others. The Mestizos were to be born of the human resolution of this cultural dichotomy. More than four hundred years later the 'Land Grant' leader of New Mexico, Reies Tijerina, was to say, 'Our mother was the Indian; our father the Spaniard. Through this marriage we were born, a New Breed.'

From almost the moment of his coming to the shores of Mexico, Cortez was mated to the willing daughter of a tribal chieftain, La Malinche, who was to become not only his mistress, but his mentor. Motecuhzoma, too, offered him one of his daughters as a token of Aztec hospitality and peace.

In many ways it may have been easier for the Indians to survive the cost of conquest than it was for the Spaniards to accept the fruits of their triumph. After all, the cosmos of the Aztecs consisted of dualities. Their gods possessed, in one being, the characteristics of the female and male, creation and death, beauty and filth; had not Coatlicue, their Goddess of Fertility, appeared with a death head, the scales of a serpent and a belt of severed human hearts and hands upon her sensous hips? She was the deity of both fertility – and faeces. If they could endure these gods, surely they could endure the Spaniards.

The Spaniards enthusiastically received their offerings. Because the native women were considered one of the spoils of conquest these conquistadores were prolific in amours and offspring. One tireless conquistador proudly boasted of his one hundred and twenty-eight children. The archival evidence reveals that this boast was not entirely bravado, nor was he unique.

Seven hundred years of Arabic and Moorish occupations of the provinces of southern Spain had created a pluralistic and multi-coloured nation. The racial distinctions had blurred. So it was not surprising that after the conquests of the Indians of the Americas the Council of Burgos morally, and the Law of the Indies politically, decreed that the dark-skinned Indians were humans, not animals, with 'rational souls'. 'Are they not men?' asked the Dominican friar Antonio de Montesinos, in 1511. To which Father Bartolome de Las Casa replied, 'Mankind is one, and all men are alike in that which concerns their birth and all natural things.'
It was a remarkable declaration among European nations of the time. And it gave sanctity to the matings and marriages of the conquerors and the conquered of the Americas. In 1516, the Cardinal Cisneros, Regent of Castille, sent emissaries to the New World to instruct the conquistadores to marry their Indian mistresses: that way, said His Eminence, 'all the *caciques* (Chieftains) would soon be Spanish'. By 1539, the King proclaimed this to be imperial expediency and issued a Royal decree ordering all conquistadores who lived with Indian women to marry within three years, or they would lose the Royal title to their lands. Renaissance humanism and national interests were wedded in a marriage of convenience.

Even so, the growth of the *Mestizo* and *Crillio* populations did create certain problems. The Spaniards tried to control the situation by dividing the people into no less than sixteen distinct racial categories, by parenthood, by skin colour, and by their degree of Spanish blood. These racial divisions were much easier to maintain on paper than in the flesh – especially since the *Coyote Mestizo* was placed lowest of the list.

In spite of their humanistic ideas the Spaniards became obsessed with the *Limpieza de Sangre* (Purity of Blood). The difficulty of unifying their nation, composed as it was of so many differing peoples and religions, placed a stigma on those who were believed to be divisive; and the emphasis on a theoretical 'Purity of Blood' became exaggerated in reverse proportion to its unlikelihood in ordinary life.

The Holy Inquisition tried to achieve by religious persuasion what the conquistadores had failed to achieve through military conquest. In Europe, a myriad of theological and spiritual conflicts influenced its creation, but in the New World *El Tribunal del Santo Oficio de la Inquisicion en Mexico* (The Tribunal of the Holy

Office of the Inquisition in Mexico) had somewhat different reasons for existence, and it had a lasting effect on the making of the *Mestizos*.

Established in Mexico City, in 1571, the Holy Office was placed under the severe leadership of the Inqusitor-General, Tomas de Torquemada. He came to the Americas personally to ferret out not merely the heretics, but their influence among the Indians and *Mestizos*.

There were at least six known Jews among the original conquistadores and perhaps many more who were unknown. So many Jews had come to Mexico after the conquest, that by the 1550s there were three hundred Jews in Mexico City: one quarter of the Spanish population. It was said by the Royal officials that these Sephardic Jews outnumbered the Catholics. By the mid-seventeenth century there were 17 synagogues in Mexico City alone. These known Jews did not include the *conversos* (converted Jews) who were even greater in number and influence.

In Mexico, one of the first men to be burned at the stake was the Jewish conquistador, Hernando Alonso, who had fought beside Cortez. He was soon to be joined at the *Auto-da-fe* by other Jewish conquistadores, Diego de Ordaz, Gonzales de Morales, and Diego de Morales. Several hundred in all were sentenced to life imprisonment, dismemberment or expulsion in the centuries to come.

Fear of the Holy Inquisition drove hundreds of these Sephardic Jews north into the more remote regions of Nuevo León and Nueva Espana (New Mexico) in what is now the southwestern United States – the land of Aztlan. Nuevo León, founded by Royal grant from Philip II, extended for 600 miles from northeast Mexico to present-day San Antonio, Texas; its Royal Governor, Luis de Carvajal y de la Cueva, had led dozens of Jewish families into the parched deserts where they became the first Spanish settlers. Some mated with Indian women. Some sought to convert the Indian people to their version of Jewish Catholicism. But neither Carvajal, himself a conquistador, nor the frontiersmen and women who accompanied him of his Entrata could escape the Inquisition. Many were arrested and tried as heretics in 1589. The same fate befell the Governor of New Mexico, Bernado Lopez de Mendizabel, who was arrested in 1661 by the Inquisition for 'being a secret Jew', the grandson of a prominent 'Jewess burned at the stake in Spain'; he was charged with 'having his bed linen changed on Fridays' and with concealing his heresy by hiding on the distant frontier, among the Indians and *Mestizos* of New Mexico.

The children of these early pioneers lent their names to many of the illustrious families of Mexico and the Southwest. For among them are those of Juarez, Madero, Diaz, Enriquez, Rodriquez, Fernandez, Baez, Gomez, Lopez, Pena, Trevino, del Valle, Acosta, Jaramillo, Mendez; the list is long . . .

Sephardic Jews and *conversos*, Arabian and Moorish exiles, Spanish hidalgos and conquistadores, Aztec gods and native women, Catholic priests and heretics were but a few of the forces that contributed to the making of the *Mestizos*. In central and eastern Mexico there were an estimated one quarter of a million black Africans, brought as slaves from the mountains of the Berbers to the jungles of the Niger, who disappeared into what Octavio Paz has named The Labyrinth of Solitude. They too were to become the ancestors of the *Mestizos*. And on the western coasts of Mexico there were hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Chinese who came on the famous 'Spanish' galleons of the Manila trade which the Chinese had built. There were so many Chinese settlers that in 1635 the Spanish artisans in Mexico City protested to the King that the Chinese were monopolizing the trades. Many of these Chinese judiciously took Spanish names. One of these who was one of the twelve founding patrons of Los Angeles, by the Royal grant of 1781, was Antonio Rodriquez, a Chinese *Mestizo*.

Of this maelstrom of hidden history a culture of contradictions was born. The secretive and bold, ecstatic and suffering, singular and multi-national, Catholic and heretical, character of the people first known as the *Coyote Mestizos*, and later as the Mexican Americans, was created not of the cultural resolution, but of the glorification of these contradictions. No wonder that the Mexican philosopher, Jose Vasconceles, in attempting to define the *Mestizos*, spoke of them as *la Raza Cósmica* (the Cosmic Race).

Part Two:

THE LANDS OF THE VIEJOS

On the mountain slopes and in the desert valleys of the Southwest most of the Spanish settlers were not Spaniards. They were largely *Mestizos* and Mexicans. Most famous of these was Don Juan de Oñate whose expedition into New Mexico in 1598 earned him the title of 'Father' of the Hispano settlements in that territory. He was born in Sonora, his wife was an Indian woman, said to be a granddaughter of Motecuhzoma, and his son, who became one of the first 'Spanish' governors of New Mexico, never went to Spain.
So, too, Don Juan Bautista de Anza, leader of the expedition to California in 1775, who later became governor of New Mexico, was not a Spaniard but a Mexican. He came from the remote Opata Indian village of Arizpe in the rugged mountains of northern Chihuahua.

The expeditions of these colonizers consisted of a few hundred *Mestizos* and Spaniards; but each was accompanied by a thousand or more Mexican Indians to whom the unexplored lands were as familiar as their own homeland in terrain and climate. And the hardships of the frontier, so difficult for the Spaniards, were much less so for the Indians; it was they, the Indians, who more often survived the rigors and settled in the wilderness that was, after all, no wilderness to them. Some of these Indians were not only given the Spanish names of their masters, but some of them acquired their 'Spanish' identity as well.

One of the oldest 'Spanish' families in New Mexico traces its ancestry to a Moorish soldier and a Pueblo Indian woman. While there is another family whose patriarch simply explains: 'Our "Spanish" blood is a little thin. But our Commanche (Indian) blood is very thick.'

Contemptuously, the Royal officials in Mexico City referred to the pioneers neither as Spaniards nor as Mexicans. They were the '*Indios barbarosos*', the barbaric Indians, a name which was applied to them as late as the nineteenth century by the fathers of Mexican independence. From the beginning the ancestors of the Mexican Americans were pariahs, the outcasts, a people who were marginal to the land they had come from, and the land they came to.

The villages of these pioneers had to be self-sufficient. Frontier life was largely influenced by that of the Indians in shelter and food and social structure. And it developed an indigenous character. Scholars have sought for similarities with life in feudal Spain, which few of the inhabitants had ever experienced and which were singularly inappropriate for the deserts. Lands on the frontier were given to the settlers by Royal decree and later by the Mexican government in the form of 'Land Grants'. These lands, taken from the Indians, were often granted in a communal, almost tribal, obligation. Settlers had to promise to share and to work the land together. In this the Land Grants institutionalized and enforced a necessity of frontier life: their settlements could not survive with the misanthrophy of the peasantry, but required the co-operation of the community, the *ejido*.

Not only the deeds to their lands, but the pastures, irrigation ditches and forests were held in common. The landowning concepts of Renaissance Europe were adapted to the ecological laws of the indigenous Americans. In modern times these traditions have become the basis for the almost religious attitude toward the land of the descendants of the Land Grant heirs and the religious overtones to the Land Grant movement. For the land is not merely individually owned property, but is the communal and sacred homeland of the people, somewhat in the sense of a tribal belief, in a Holy Land.

In all there were at least 1,715 Land Grants. They ranged from California to Texas, across the entire Southwest, covering tens upon tens of millions of acres, and extending over some of the richest lands in the United States.

Since these Land Grants were officially decreed by governments, they had to be dealt with in international treaties. When the United States conquered the lands, after its victory in the Mexican-American War of 1846-48, the legality of the Land Grants was recognized in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo which declared, 'In the said territories, property of every kind, now belonging to the Mexicans ... shall be inviolately respected.' And the Supreme Court of the United States concurred in this opinion: '... the whole civilized world would be outraged if private property should be generally confiscated' ... 'The people change their allegiance; their relations to eachother and their rights to property remain undisturbed ...'

That was not to be. In New Mexico some 80% of these Land Grants were lost to their heirs by the actions of the Territorial Courts with a simple legal procedure. An order was issued, in English, requiring the Land Grant heirs to come to the capital and to re-register their lands. Few could read English. Few obeyed the order. In this way the Land Grants were appropriated by the Anglos, in huge areas. One alone, the Maxwell Land Grant, totalled 1,714,764 acres; while another was four million acres.

In California, Texas, Colorado, and Arizona the lands were similarly appropriated. The 'Spanish' villages, if they knew what had happened, refused to recognize that their lands had been lost. To this day the village elders rightly hold onto their original Spanish and Mexican Land Grants.

Efforts to regain these lands began again after World War II. The *Alianza Federal de Los Pueblos Libres* (Federal Alliance of Free City States) was organized in the 1960s to re-establish the legality of the old Land Grants. Founded by Reies Tijerina, an itinerant preacher and religious prophet, the *Alianza* attained national fame when its followers armed themselves and raided a Courthouse in New Mexico. Newspapers declared that a 'civil war' had begun; and the National Guard sent troops and tanks into the mountains to capture the poor villagers, only to find that some of the most prominent families were members of the *Alianza*, including the wife of the Governor.

But, the *Alianza*'s more significant action had been to call a village meeting in the same Courthouse to elect their own Land Grant officials and to issue a proclamation announcing:

> USA HAS NO TITLE FOR NEW MEXICO
> ALL TRESPASSERS MUST GET OUT.
> ALL SPANISH AND INDIAN PUEBLOS
> ARE FREE FOREVER.*

The government was hardly prepared for such an act of devolution. It arrested the villagers.

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* 'WE ACCUSE the Legislature of New Mexico of:

1. Progressively destroying Indo-Hispano language, culture, and history in the minds and persons of the Indo-Hispano population of New Mexico. *2.* Lavishly financing a state university system whose major institution (the University of New Mexico) has only 6 percent Indo-Hispano students while at the same time allowing (for lack of small matching sums in state funds) large sums of federal money to go unused in welfare and health benefits that would go to the poor who are disproportionately Indo-Hispano. *3.* Putting money for public schools – almost all (about 85 percent) for administrators' and teachers' salaries – ahead of the content of what is taught and the purposes for which the schools are in fact being used. *4.* Refusing and failing to enforce the provisions of the Constitution of New Mexico designed to protect and preserve Indo-Hispano language, culture and history. This often results in Indo-Hispano kids hating themselves and their origins. *5.* Allowing teachers to be hired into the state's public school system without any regard for the Constitutional requirement that they speak Spanish and without being trained in New Mexico's historical background. *6.* Allowing Indo-Hispano kids to be pushed out of the public schools. *7.* Favoring the rich (particularly rich Anglos) over the poor (particularly Indo-Hispanos): for example, the legislature is even now intending to raise the sales tax which falls heaviest on the poor to finance greatly increased public school expenditures for an education that is designed to, and has the effect of, destroying the Indo-Hispano culture in all its aspects. *8.* Refusing and failing to pass laws to preserve and protect the land – particularly the land grants – of the Indo-Hispano population; instead the legislature has consistently passed legislation to enable rich Anglos to take and/or keep land rightfully that of the Indo-Hispano population. *9.* Passing laws to allow the public utilities and services to milk the poor, such as telephones, gas, electricity, banking, insurance, finance companies, buses, and the judicial system. *10.* Allowing

the system of the common law to grow up in New Mexico that brings with it the necessity for extensive legal services and the principle that the man with the most money wins, rather than encouraging the system of the civil law and attempting to minimize the use of lawyers and the effectiveness of money to decide judicial proceedings. *11.* Encouraging and allowing the use of the police power of the state against Indo-Hispanos in a discriminatory manner, resulting in great political crimes going unsolved, such as the death of Eulogio Salazar and Tommy Valles in Albuquerque. *12.* Using Indo-Hispanos as front men for the conspiracy set forth above, particularly by promising and giving them money and/or prestige in the Anglo-dominated society and/or power over their fellow Indo-Hispanos.

THE SANTA FE BERETS' TEN POINT PROGRAMME presented to the Legislature of New Mexico on 21 January, 1969, and to the people of Santa Fe and New Mexico:

1. We want to see BILINGUAL EDUCATION become a reality soon, a right guaranteed over a hundred years ago in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Education must not continue to be biased against Spanish-speaking people. The colleges in New Mexico should reflect and teach our Chicano heritage, and not just turn us into brown Anglos. We don't want to be absorbed! *2.* We want SCHOOL COMMUNITY CONTROL BOARDS consisting of parents, to make sure that bilingual education and studies of Mexican-American cultural heritage are carried out. The schools and teachers should be responsible to the parents who pay for them, and whose children's lives are being molded by them. *3.* The POLICE should be directly responsible to community control boards of local people. They should live in the neighborhoods they work in. Police are to protect the people not intimidate them. *4.* We think that if eighteen-year-olds are old enough to be drafted, they are old enough to VOTE. *5.* People forced to live on WELFARE should get enough to live on and be treated like human beings. We need more jobs in Santa Fe with decent wages. *6.* We need medical CLINICS for poor people, where they can get treatment without having to travel long distances. These clinics should have pharmacies to fill prescriptions. If local people were trained to work in these clinics, many jobs could be provided. *7.* We need a stronger MINIMUM WAGE LAW. Many of us – especially service workers – must try to live on $1 an hour. But it costs as much to live here as in California or New York, where wages are higher. *8.* CORPORATION TAX LAWS should be revised. The big corporations must put back some of the millions they take out of New Mexico every year. *9.* We support the demands of those who want to get back some of the LAND GRANTS that were stolen from Chicanos. *10.* All POLITICAL PRISONERS should be freed from jail immediately. This means all who have stood up for the rights of Spanish-speaking people.

– *ALIANZA* statement, 1968

Reies Tijerina, in the years since, has vainly sought to convince the Congress in Washington to establish a federal commission to investigate the claims of these Land Grant heirs. Several bills have been introduced, but nothing has happened. Nor is anything likely to happen. The ownership of many of the wealthiest lands in the nation might be questioned.

In dismay, the Land Grant heirs, led by Tijerina, went to Mexico where the then President Luis Echeverria agreed to take the matter to the United Nations, for political reasons of his own. Encouraged, the claimants arranged a meeting with Mexico's new President, Jose Lopez Portillo, convinced that only international pressure would bring about adherence to the terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The hope of regaining lands lost one hundred years ago seemed slight. To some it was romantic nostalgia. But to the villagers it was less a matter of legal probability than of religious beliefs: their ancestral lands were sacred and God would restore them. In a mountain village one of these Land Grant heirs, Gregorita Aguilar, said simple: 'God may stall, but He doesn't forget.'

Part Three:
THE PASTORAL LIFE

On the maps of the late nineteenth century all the lands of the American West were almost invariably described as the Great American Desert. They were and they still are! Were it not for the vast networks of massive dams and irrigation systems, the lands would be the same deserts they have always been. In some regions the rainfall is less than six inches a year.

To plant a seed, the earth has to be broken with a pick-axe; it is that hard and dry. And it resists man. In the mountain villages, and in the river valleys, the farms were small. The Mexican Americans farmed as the Indians had, using 'dry farming' and little water; for the water was scarce, and the sun fierce, and the winds never seemed to cease. To this day most of the village farms have but few acres and cows. A man who had a small herd of ten cows was a rancher. His herd and his crop were limited by the deserts. They were at the mercy of the harsh, desert weather, the sudden thunderstorms and deluges of hail stones which relieved the constant drought with equally unpredictable disasters. Of this weather it was said, in Spanish: 'It is a good day for heretics.'

The nature of the land influenced the nature of the people. They became known as frugal, pithy in speech, given to laconic *dichos* (folksayings), humbled by God and the elements, but intensely independent, proud and self-reliant.

If the taciturn land resisted man, it was somewhat more hospitable to beasts. And the settlers from Mexico brought large herds of cattle and sheep with them; it required forty acres of dry land to feed a cow, but there was a great deal of open land. Ranching was more profitable than farming, and prospered. Flocks of sheep and herds of cattle displaced the wild buffalo of the native Indians. On the *Llanos* (plains) of Texas and New Mexico there soon were more than one million sheep on the once common pastures of the villages. 'Patrons' arose who owned vast herds, such as the de Bacas of New Mexico and the Carillos of California, who built great ranches. In the Rio Grande valley of Texas there were an estimated three million cattle on the ranches of these patrons, which were to become one of the most sought after spoils of the Mexican American War. These herds were to be the beginning of the livestock industry of the American West.

Not only the practice of ranching, but the cowboys' mystique was introduced into the country by Mexicans. The cowboy himself, a word that comes from *vaqueros*, that was mispronounced buckaroos, was originally either a Mexican or Indian – before he was Anglicized. So, too, a *ranchero* became a ranch, *la reata* became a lariat, a *bronco* a horse, a *chaporal* a chap, and a *juzgado* a hoosgow, or jail. Some of the old Spanish words were simply adopted into English, as there were no other words to describe what the Mexican Americans had created: rodeos, sombreros, patios, ramadas, mustangs ...

As the ranches of the patrons were either bought or appropriated by the victors of the Mexican-American War, their way of life was assimilated into the cultures

of the conquerors. So, in more surreptitious ways, were the *vaqueros*. They, in their new Americanized guise, became the mythological heroes of the West.

The old patrons were replaced by agricultural corporations. In Texas and California, in the early days, and later in New Mexico and Arizona, the new land syndicates established vast farms and ranches employing hundreds of landless *campesinos* (farm labourers). In the beginning these men were mostly Chinese immigrants and Indians, but in a few years the Mexican Americans predominated, not only on the farms, but also in the mines.

In Mexico itself decades of revolutions and counter-revolutions scorched the fields and destroyed the rural villages. The refugees fled into the cities. And those who lived in northern Mexico crossed the border into the United States seeking peace and a new way of life – if only temporarily. The migrations to the north that began as a trickle before the First World War became a flood after World War II. Those who swam across the Rio Grande came to be known as 'wetbacks', a derisive term used to describe all those who migrated from one desert into another, without passports, or permission. By the 1970s these illegal immigrants were thought to number several million; Leonard Chapman, the Commissioner of Immigration during Nixon's administration, believed there were from six to nine million 'wetbacks' in the country. There could be no really accurate count; the illegal immigrants could hardly be expected to wait for the federal census taker.

In the fields the 'wetbacks' worked without the protections of the law, and were denied its benefits. They were traditionally underpaid and abused, for they had no recourse. From time to time Congress sought to offer them some protection, and alternatively suggested they be barred entirely and be deported *en masse*. But, in the Southwest they constitute an important part of the work force and the employers have succeeded in dissuading Congress from passing any significant legislation, either pro or con.

Ever since the turn of the century there have been attempts to organize the *campesinos* into unions. They failed. One reason may be that these efforts were based on political and class lines, and they largely ignored the cultural and ethnic dreams and needs of the Mexican Americans as a national minority.

Cesar Chavez changed that. On the day in September 1965 when the *campesinos* of the National Farm Workers Union gathered in the Guadalupe Catholic Church of Delano, California, Chavez proclaimed *la Huelga* (the strike) of the *campesinos* as a Penance and a Pilgrimage. The 'Penance we accept symbolizes the suffering we shall have, to bring justice', he said; and the Pilgrimage, a 250 mile procession to Sacramento, the State capital, began under the banner of the Virgin of Guadalupe, Patroness of Mexico, the Sacred Cross, and the Star of David.

The union Chavez created was more than a union, he said; it was a movement, a spiritual revival. Its successes, where others had failed, were founded in part on its religious belief in God and its reverence for the ancestral lands. 'Our sweat and our blood have fallen on this land to make other men rich', the union declared; our 'Pilgrimage is a witness to the suffering we have seen for generations.'

Paradoxically, as these *campesinos* grew politically stronger, they were to become weaker socially. The mechanization of agriculture was driving them from the fields into the urban *barrios* (ghettos) of the cities. Fewer and fewer farm labourers were needed on the farms, which were becoming more and more like factories in the fields.

But their longing for the earth still haunted the refugees. In one poor village Cleoflas Vigil, a farmer and religious singer, wrote ruefully:

> My brother this is your mother,
> Mother, fertile and fruitful,
> If anyone takes her from you
> You will be an orphan;
> The earth is your food, and your mother;
> I tell you once again.

Part Four:
THE URBAN CAMPESINOS

Cities were the birthplace of the Mexican American minority. In the countryside the 'Spanish' villagers and Mexican *campesinos* were the majority. The rural villages they came from were almost entirely Spanish-speaking. Maybe there was an English-speaking shopkeeper, rancher or banker, but most of the people belonged to the extended families of the villagers; they lived in their own world. They did not know they were a national minority. They had to learn.

Of necessity the constitution of California and New Mexico were written in Spanish and English. Though the official language of the governments was English, Spanish remained the language of the majority of the people until the twentieth century.

When the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed in 1848, nearly the entire Mexican population was rural. Almost one hundred years later, in 1930, half of the Mexican American population was still rural. These rural communities were not only isolated and insular, they were conservative and self-reliant.

The few thousand 'whites', or 'Anglos', who originally settled in the Southwest were clustered in the mercantile centres. And the towns that they built into cities were shaped to meet their economic and cultural needs. Some of these 'Anglos' sought to emulate, if not imitate, the native culture, in form if not in substance; but they merely adopted the rural arts into their urban society. Mud bricks of adobe and straw were manufactured of cement that was mud-coloured. In the cash economy introduced by the merchants it was no longer possible for the *campesinos* and villagers to survive with their subsistence farming and barter trade. Their younger people began to go to the cities in search of paying jobs. The coming of paved roads and electricity, after World War II, both inspired and facilitated the exodus.

The migrations to the cities were inevitable and inexorable. But, as always, the rural people brought their rural way of life, and beliefs, with them. Not only did they surround their homes with gardens and goats, they also tried, sometimes vainly, to hold on to their extended families and communal customs, in folk medicine and religious faith.

Not merely did they live on the edges of the cities in the early days, but on the edges of urban mentality. The created the *barrio*, a city within a city, that was given the name which the Spanish conquistadores had given to the Indian quarters of the cities they conquered.

Barrios are more than slums, more than ghettos. They are integrated within and separated from the larger cities, dependent and independent, with two cultures, two languages, two identities and two ways of life, rural and urban. In a sense the *barrios* were the creations, and the creators, of these social contradictions; a place of cultural synthesis and apostasy. As such the *barrios* were not an unnatural home for the multi-coloured *Mestizo*, the Mexican American.

In the *barrios* the people were divided from without and from within. The rural loyalties to families, villages and regions were jealously preserved, partly as a buffer against the uncertainties of city life, and partly for social pleasure. But these old loyalties revived and perpetuated hostilities and suspicions that further divided the communities. And it became difficult for a *barrio* to get together in support of a single issue, or a political candidate. There is no national urban leader of the *barrios* – to this day.

The political and economic life of the Mexican American people has suffered because of this lack of unity; a familing of many rural and tribal peoples in the cities. So divisive is *barrio* life that in Los Angeles, where the people comprise the world's third largest group of urban Mexicans (after Mexico City and Guadalajara), they do not have an elected representative on the City Council. But life in the *barrios* has one common denominator: most of the people are poorer than those outside. The average income in the *barrios* is about one-third less than the national average. More than one-fifth of the people live below the 'poverty level', compared to one-tenth of those outside, and only one family in ten earns a middle class income compared to one-fourth of the people outside. The people suffer from the usual lack of education and urban job skills; they are the victims of the usual discrimination, racism and inequality that affects many national minorities. All of this causes many outsiders to view the *barrios* with some trepidation, if not mystification. Their ignorance of rural ways and codes of culture in the *barrios*, and the *barrios*' isolation, sometimes makes them seem like places of mystery and intrigue. So stereotypes arise that conceal the real *barrios* and their real problems.

The stereotypes of the lazy Mexican, sleeping beneath his huge sombrero, is one such caricature; he is lethargic and treacherous, romantic and murderous, cold-blooded and passionate. Comic and cruel, these stereotypes are still common. The media image of the Mexican American has changed little through the years and it persists in the fantasy of ignorance that gave it birth.

In some ways these stereotype images may be better than none at all. The literary and television worlds have largely treated the urban Mexican Americans as if they did not exist; they are invisible. And the statistical image has been no more accurate. Mexican Americans were not mentioned by name in the government census, until recently; they were listed as 'white' and not identified as a national minority.

Now that the government's census not only counts, but identifies, the Mexican Americans the official population figure is still strangely underestimated. There are 7,200,000 Mexican Americans in the United States, the government says. But, the census takers lament that their margin of error may be as high as 32% and millions of Spanish-speaking people may not be counted, at all.

From 85 to 90% of the Mexican Americans today live in the cities. They are highly visible. They are perhaps the most urbanized rural people in the country. In the *barrios* one of every three of these people remain invisible, however. They are non-persons.

Part Five:
THE BIRTH OF THE CHICANOS

Chicano was a curse word. In some regions of Texas and New Mexico it still is not uttered in polite society. For it means a neer-do-well, a wino, a man fallen so low that he lives on goat hill, among the goats. Some of the older people feel the word is an insult and they refuse to be called by it; they are angered by the term as Black Americans are by the racist term, Nigger.

But, in politics *Chicano* has a new meaning. It designates the politically awakened Mexican American. The word *Chicano*, in its new meaning was perhaps first heard during the student strikes in the *barrios* of California, in the late 1960s. Some say these students used the term as young Blacks used the word, Nigger, to throw into the faces of those they considered racists. Some say the word *Chico*, the traditional racial term used patronizingly to summons young Mexican Americans, was similarly the basis for *Chicano*. Either way, *Chicano* had the sound and purpose of defiance. And it was fittingly popularized by the young.

In the schools of the *barrios* the speaking of Spanish was often forbidden, and punished by physical beatings or public humiliation. These were but a few of many discriminations that Spanish-speaking students endured at the time. By the decade of the sixties the mood among the nations' youth was one of protest and it erupted in the *barrios* in ways that were both imitative and uniquely Mexican American; the student strikes, or 'Blowouts', were but the most visible. For these were years of upheaval and it was no coincidence that the *Huelga* of the *campesinos* led by Cesar Chavez, the La Raza Unida Party led by Angel Guiterrez, the Land Grant movement led by Reies Tijerina and the Aztlan Independence Convention led by Rodolfo Gonzales. all occurred in the *barrios*, almost simultaneously. From that time the meaning of the word *Chicano* grew and changed as did the *Chicano* movement. It was – and still is – a developing cultural and political concept, and yet undefined. *

* 'In the early 1960s, Cesar Chavez organized successful strikes in California's Central Valley, using the concept of *La Raza*

as an organizing tool. He stressed the Spanish language, Indo-Hispanic culture, and religion (Catholicism, as well as the protective *Virgen de Guadalupe* inherited from the Aztecs) when talking with workers from the Texas cotton fields or the grape valleys of California. His style captured the imagination of the field workers, and the new Mexican-American was born, the *chicano* who could feel proud to be a Mexican and who could also feel that his *raza* brother, Fidel Castro, was in some way fighting the same battles he was.

In northern New Mexico, Reies Lopez Tijerina touched the same sensitive chord as did Cesar Chavez. By reviving old traditions and laws, Tijerina rallied the *chicano* residents of isolated Rio Arriba County to claim what he felt was rightfully theirs – namely, land which had been made into a United States national forest. In the ensuing action, violence and death brought the *Alianza* (the organization created to reclaim *chicano* territory) of New Mexico to national attention, and especially to the attention of the young *chicanos* in the *barrios* throughout the Southwest. Tijerina, Chavez, and younger militants with brown berets and brown satin jackets were responding not only to the needs of their people, but to the consciousness of blacks and student activists as well.

The grape strikes, the *Alianza*, the rebirth of the *chicano* press in the format of an underground press, and the growing self-awareness of the younger Mexicans, has been occurring all during the 1960s. Their heroes are not only Juarez, Zapata, and Villa, but Joaquin Murieta, Cortina, and other heroes of Mexican resistance to Anglo conquest. With this new self-awareness there has come a shift away from the older political tradition of reward your friends and punish your enemies. Such older organizations as the Mexican-American Political Association have not always been able to deliver votes and other political support, a fact well known to both their friends and their enemies. As a result, the Mexican-Americans have little political strength. A few older politicians with Spanish surnames have been able to capitalize on their ancestry to get themselves elected. They have also combined militant talk and accommodationist action for the same purpose. The older political organizations tend to reject activism or any form of direct confrontation. Inevitably conflict has developed between the old and new politics. The new *Raza* politicians, angry young men in brown berets, call the old politicians *malinches* and try to force the older politicos to change their politics; failing that, they denounce them as puppets. Mexican-Americans have come alive as a racial minority, and in their new consciousness have begun to probe the old injustices suffered by their ancestors at the hands of the *gringos*. In the *barrios*, mothers and fathers are now taking an active interest in their children's schools. And the teenagers have begun to demand their rights as *chicanos*, closing down schools if necessary, as they did in East Los Angeles in 1968. They discovered that the Constitution of California provided for two official languages and so they are beginning to demand that Spanish be taught, along with English, in their schools. The young *chicanos* had to prove to themselves, as well as to the *gabachos* (Anglos), that Spanish is just as good as English.

Examples of the new militancy are expressed in any of the newly founded *chicano* papers. For example, *El Gallo*, in Denver, ran a column headed "La Raza Youth 50% of Vietnam Casualties". The headline actually referred to a casualty report for one day in which three out of six Americans from Colorado killed had Spanish surnames. Throughout the Southwest, posters of Zapata, Villa, and Huey P. Newton appeared on the walls of thousands of young *chicanos*. A *chicano* cooperative in northern New Mexico harvested its first and second crops and attempted to rebuild a medical clinic that had been bombed by Minutemen. Reies Tijerina began to serve a long prison sentence after being convicted on charges stemming from his raid on the Tierra Amarilla courthouse. *Chicano* studies programs appeared in colleges and junior colleges and Brown Beret chapters spread throughout southwest cities. At the same time as radical *chicano* activity spread among youth, the farmworkers union grew closer to the AFL–CIO and the liberal wing of the Catholic Church. While varieties of brown capitalism were offered by government agencies, radical brown poets began meeting regularly, and published *El Pocho Che*, a *chicano* memorial to Ernesto "Che" Guevara. Conflicts between *chicanos* and blacks erupted over how the small rewards in the poverty programs were to be divided and quarrels broke out inside some of the radical organizations. The struggles emerged from competing nationalisms and although both militant blacks and militant *chicanos* recognized the dangers of division, the disagreements could not always be submerged. Among radical *chicanos*, the word revolution is frequently used, militancy is very high, but beneath the rhetoric lies little content. But some of the young *chicanos* who associate themselves with the third-world movement no longer think of their position in American society as only "their" problem. They have come to define American society as a world empire and to identify their struggle with blacks, Vietnamese, Cubans, women, and all oppressed people.

Some of these *chicano* youth have rejected the authority of the white rulers. The system of thought that has told them to wait, to be patient, to have faith in gradual evolution, no longer holds their mind. But the radical *chicanos*, like the Black Panthers, do not know yet exactly what they want and in which direction their movement ought to go. They are dissatisfied with nationalism, but beyond identifying themselves rhetorically with blacks and Indians they have not been able to forge a new strategy. So they remain still defined by the ideology of America: another minority fighting to melt into the pot while they insist they fight for their historic identity. Inside the *chicano* communities a struggle has begun to develop a new political and cultural style; it is a struggle between the old-timers, the accommodationists with loud but empty rhetoric and the young and angry men in brown berets, who have learned not only of Juarez, Zapata, and Villa but of Joaquin Murieta and Cortina and the other heroes of Mexican Resistance to the Anglo conquest.'

– Paul Jacobs et al., *To Serve The Devil*, Random House, 1971

Since the *barrios* were outside of the mainstream of society, the activities of the *Chicanos* at first necessarily took the form of protests against the *status quo* and its social institutions. It hardly mattered if these protests were nationalistic or integrationist. By their nature they were mostly negative confrontations by those outside of the society, who wished to be inside, or by those who wished to withdraw from it. Even when the protesters confronted that society to proclaim their independence from it, there were acknowledging it and seeking to be acknowledged by it.

The protests of the time were not simply protests. Some were affirmations of the existence of the protesters; a way of announcing their presence and strength to their opponents, and themselves. For a confrontation of necessity required both sides to recognize one another, and this – to the *Chicanos* who then had little political power – was their first step toward recognition. *Chicanos*, by their protests, were establishing themselves as a part of the social structure of the nation. Hence, it was the confrontation itself that became the dramatic and historic event.

And by these protests the peoples of the *barrios* accomplished something else; they who had been divided were beginning to get together, to see themselves as no longer a pliant and submissive people, but as outspoken and aggressive. It mattered less that their demands were not being met – few expected they would be – than that they were developing a new image of themselves, that of the *Chicano*.

In a few years there were hundreds of protests involving tens of thousands of people. Few political groups had existed in the *barrios* but now there were hundreds. There were more than three hundred in the *barrios* of East Los Angeles alone. Where there had been few regional and national organizations, they, too, had now

become numerous: the Brown Berets, the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund, the National Farmworkers Union, the Chicanos Por la Raza, the National Council of La Raza, the PADRES (Spanish-speaking Catholic priests), MECHA (university students), the Mexican American Unity Council, and large numbers of educational, medical, family and community organizations in the *barrios* across the entire nation.
Most of these groups were founded either on a community level, or by young militants from the universities. Several were later supported by government agencies and private foundations. However, in most cases their practical activities did not equal their political rhetoric. They were concerned with the tedious and often frustrating tasks of attempting to change age-old stereotypes, in order to improve the economic and social position of the people in the *barrios*.

The militants continually spoke of the coming nationalist revolution – much as fundamentalists evoke the coming of Armageddon. Revolution and *la Causa* became exhortations that were synonymous with even minor social changes. It was a symbolism that law enforcement officers tended to take literally; especially when a few of the small radical groups claimed credit for the bombing of some supermarkets and banks.
Some officials responded to these groups with fear and alarm. Thousands of activists were arrested over the years, and hundreds were jailed. But when there was little evidence of any forthcoming political revolution, the rhetoric and fear, on both sides, tended to subside.
In time, officials began to institutionalize many of the demands of the *Chicano* protesters. Local and national agencies were established – often staffed by former protesters – that attempted to incorporate the needs of the *barrios* into social programs. During past administrations in Washington, the Mexican Americans were relegated to positions as assistants. Now there was an effort to appoint a few *Chicanos* to token national leadership: Grace Olivarez became head of the Community Services Administration, and Lionel Castillo was appointed the Commissioner of Immigration. In the southwestern states the local political machines supported the election of Governor Raul Castro (in Arizona), and Governor Jerry Apodaca (in New Mexico), though unfortunately their administrations were marked by scandal and loss of popular support.

These changes influenced the creation of a growing *Chicano* middle class. Once it had established itself, however, the middle class began to move away from the *barrios* where it had originated. It began to imitate, more and more, the 'Anglo' culture and values into which it had moved, thereby further isolating itself from the peoples of the *barrios*. In the *barrios* there was little evidence of the material benefits, and social contentment, that the middle class aspired to with the assistance of federal programmes and funds.

One of these federal programmes had a curiously divisive effect; the legislation permitting bi-lingual education in the schools (Spanish and English), which many hailed as a triumphant recognition of the language and culture of Mexican Americans. However, a leading expert in the field, Dr. Joshua Fishman, dubbed it hypocrisy. It merely authorized the using of Spanish to teach English, he said, and was not really bi-lingual education at all; for when it succeeded it would have eliminated itself and, if it failed, it would have defeated itself.
Some years before the Council of Mexican American Educators in the Federal Office of Education had warned of the same deception; preservation of the Mexican American language and culture required at least 100,000 bi-lingual educators, who not merely taught English to the Spanish-speaking, but who taught Spanish to the English-speaking peoples. That sort of mutual recognition did not exist.

After a decade of social and political struggles, the country as a whole had not recognized the *Chicanos*. There was no profound impact on the national consciousness and institutions, such as had been experienced by the Black and Indian movements.
Some observers have believed that the *Chicano* movement was inspired by the Black civil rights campaign of the 1960s. Newspapers have sought to depict *Chicano* leaders such as Cesar Chavez and 'Corky' Gonzales as a 'Brown Martin Luther King and Malcolm X'. In the *barrios* there were attempts to imitate the tactics and slogans of the Blacks.

And yet the cultural, historical and national differences of these groups are greater than their similarities. The campaigns that brought recognition to the Blacks did not so reward the *Chicanos* and often led to unrealistic expectations and bitter defeats.

The poor of the *barrios* once more may have had a familiar feeling of frustration and futility. If so, it was voiced by silence; in the presidential election of 1976, though nearly five million Spanish-speaking citizens were then eligible to vote, 60% of them Mexican-Americans, less than 40% bothered to cast a ballot. The traditional suspicion of the political process continued and deepened.

And yet, the feeling of disillusionment was not without its positive effect. There was reluctant recognition of the need for self-reliance and community development that was indigenous to the *barrios*, as their forefathers had believed and practised. Clinics and businesses, either co-operatively or individually owned, were established in many cities. In these, too, the clash of cultures created not unexpected problems, for it is difficult for a national minority to maintain its identity when it participates in the dominant culture of a majority society. Even so, the *Chicanos* were a synthesis of opposing cultures, as were their ancestors, and the inner *barrio* development offered new opportunities as well as new problems.

Creation of the national minority of Mexican Americans had taken centuries. It was neither a static, nor a stable, concept. The *Chicanos* were merely the most recent, and perhaps most elusive, of its many reincarnations.
In seeking to ennoble the identity of *Chicanismo* and to give the *Chicanos* a noble heritage, its cultural roots were sought in ancient history. Scholars began to speculate whether *Chicano* was not, in its origin, a Nahuatl word of the Aztecs, coming from *Mexicanoob*, which referred to the god Quetzalcoatl. The Spanish, unable to enunciate the Indian word, probably pronounced it *Mexicano*, and *Shicano*, which in time became *Chicano*. But, whether or not it had an imperial beginning was of little consequence to the poor people of the *barrios*.

The meaning of *Chicano*, ultimately, would be determined by the goals and directions that the people took, and by their successes and failures in achieving those aims.

Part Six:
THE FUTURE OF THE CHICANOS

Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter wrote three decades ago that 'our basic internal problem' as a nation constituted 'considerations of homogeneous diversities within the nation that do not correspond to the divisions between the Union and the forty-eight states'. The problem was 'how a country that is a continent can be governed by organs that fairly represent its disciplined will and at the same time adequately evoke the diverse civilized potentials of its people'; for this, he said, is 'the basic problem of American civilization'. The founders of the country did not 'preclude the devising of regional arrangements', Justice Frankfurter said, to accommodate 'the intractable diversities among men' ...

Constitutionally that may be true. But neither did the founding fathers make any constitutional provision that recognized cultural and national rights, as they had protected the rights of individuals, and states. The civil rights of an individual member of a cultural or national minority may be safeguarded by the Constitution, and by numerous laws, while the rights of the minority, as a whole, are not. There exists a dichotomy between political and national rights that has not been defined or resolved.

For a minority people who wish to assert their rights this creates certain problems. They may be seen as threatening not only the public order but the structure of the nation – when they may merely be demanding their rights within the laws of the nation. In seeking social equality and advancement the *Chicano* movement has often found itself in this paradoxical position. Paradoxical because the ancestors of the Mexican Americans were founders of the nation before the Pilgrim fathers and mothers set sail, and they have contributed to the spiritual and material wealth of the land for more than four hundred years. Thus to demand recognition of their heritage can hardly be considered an unpatriotic or threatening act.

Beyond the historic contribution there is their contemporary presence in the USA. Whether one accepts the government figure of slightly over seven million, or the more widely accepted figure of over twelve million, the Mexican American citizens are a significant part of the population. They are interwoven in the fibre and fabric of almost every geographical area and major industry. When taken together with Spanish-speaking people from other Latin countries, they have made the United States 'the fourth largest Spanish-speaking nation in the world'. And their language and culture have for so long been indigenous to the country that they cannot be separated from the mainstream of 'Anglo' culture, regardless what political direction the *Chicano* movement might take.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the Mexican American people is that it is one of two indigenous national minorities; the other being the American Indians. The saying is: We did not come to America, America came to us! And this has placed both groups in a precarious position. For both have indigenous claims not only to the culture and history of the country, but to large areas of its lands, so recognized by international treaties, signed by the United States government. Being a conquered people in such circumstances does not strengthen a national minority. It places it in jeopardy. The dominant nation rarely feels at ease when faced with an internal situation such as this.

The rise of the *Chicanos* in political and social life has often created opposition from those who may feel their jobs, positions, influence and power are being threatened. If voter registration campaigns, which have succeeded in registering 300,000 in California and another 160,000 in Texas, do bring the minority to a majority status in the polls of certain areas and achieve a more democratic balance, that opposition may increase substantially.

In the Southwest there has been a growing hostility to the *Chicano* movement for political representation. Most clearly, this hostility is evident in regions where *Chicanos*, together with other minorities, might form an electoral majority equal to their numbers. Elections have shown an increasing polarization of voters along cultural and racial lines. The 'anti-*Chicano*' sentiment has not yet been formalized in public groups and programmes, but if the predicted increase in the Mexican American population and electorate continues, the 'Stop the *Chicanos*' movements may well become more visible and openly organized.

The *Chicano* cause, *La Causa*, has been handicapped as well by the lack of political allies. Co-operation between *Chicanos* and Blacks has been hampered by competition for government jobs and recognition. And those sections of the white population who actively supported the Black civil rights movement have offered only sporadic and sparse support to the *Chicano*. This has been especially true in the Southwest where racism against the Mexican Americans is traditionally the strongest.

Nonetheless the ability of the *Chicano* to adapt to a dominant society is self-evident. Such assimilation of another culture – and assimilation by it – has been accomplished with remarkable frequency in the history of Mexican Americans. The *Chicano* has been born of cultural contradictions that go far back into history. The ability of these people to integrate an opposing culture, which they have assimilated, is equally remarkable. Instead of becoming a one-sided mirror image of the cultures which have conquered them – or which they have imitated – they have ingeniously achieved a synthesis of cultures and made them their own.

The future of the *Chicanos* may depend on a choice between, or a merging of, these two historic paths. One is the choice by the *Chicano* communities of defining their national identity and deciding on their direction as a national minority. The second is a choice by the nation, as a whole, of defining the nature of the political and constitutional union that binds our culturally diverse and pluralistic people together in a singularly unique nation. It would seem that either choice is dependent on the other.

So far neither has been resolved. But they must be resolved – for the benefit of the Mexican American minority and the entire country.

A MEXICAN-AMERICAN GLOSSARY

alambrista From *alambre*, "wire"; a person who crosses the border illegally by (figuratively) climbing a fence

aliancista A member of the Alianza Federal de Mercedes, Reies Tijerina's organization

Anglo Short for Anglo-American; in the Southwest sometimes designating all non-Mexican-descent Americans

arriero Mexican mule driver

AWOC Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee, an AFL-CIO union

Aztlán Mythical homeland of the Aztec or Mexica Indians

barrio District; in the United States, Mexican American quarter of town

Basta Ya! Enough!

bracero From *brazo*, "arm"; a worker, a hired hand, especially a Mexican brought to the United States under a labour contract

cabildo Town council in Spanish colonies

californio Original Hispanic-Mexican inhabitant of California, or his descendant

caudillo Strong man; leader, often military

CAWIU Cannery and Agricultural Workers Industrial Union, Communist-affiliated

Chicano Truncated form of *Mexicano*, today with overtones of ethnic nationalism and activism

cholo Pejorative term in California for Mexican immigrant

los cientificos Mexican followers of the positivist philosophy of Auguste Comte; supporters of Porfirio Diaz

Cinco de Mayo Commemoration of Mexican defeat of the French at Puebla, Mexico, on May 5, 1862

colonia Small settlement, sometimes part of a town, inhabited by Mexicans

conquistador(es) Early Spanish conquerors of the New World

contratista A Labour contractor, usually for agricultural work

criollo Colonial term referring to American-born person of "pure" Spanish parentage

CROM Confederacion Regional Obrera Mexicana, a leading Mexican labour union

CSO Community Service Organization, founded in latter 1940s

CUCOM Confederacion de Uniones de Campesinos y Obreros Mexicanos

CUOM Confederacion de Uniones Obreras Mexicanas

dorado Literally "gilded"; refers to Pancho Villa's troops, because of their highly decorated uniforms

empresario Land-grantee who was required to bring in a specified number of settlers in order to validate his grant

enganchista Literally a recruiter; one who recruits farm labor

gabacho Pejorative term for whites; originally meant French (therefore foreign)

gachupin(es) Colonial term of derogation used to identify Spaniards

gente de razon Literally "people of reason"; colonial term referring to members of the upper classes

gringo Pejorative term for whites; probably originally from *griego* "Greek" (therefore foreign)

Grito de Dolores Famous cry of Father Miguel Hidalgo which initiated the Mexican revolution of 1810

hidalgo A nobleman

Hispano New Mexican of Hispanic-Mexican origins

LULAC League of United Latin American Citizens, founded in 1929

machismo Term used to connote virile manliness; from *macho*, "male"

maderista Follower or supporter of Francisco Madero during 1910 Mexican revolution

Mande vd., senor Literally, "Command (me), sir." Often used by Mexicans as a polite response of recognition when spoken to. "At your service."

manito Truncated form of *hermanito*, "little brother"; slightly pejorative term for Spanish-speaking New Mexican

MAPA In California, Mexican American Political Association; in Texas, Mexican Americans for Political Action; both organizations formed in the 1960s

mapista A member or supporter of *MAPA*

MASA Mexican American Student Association

MASC Mexican American Student Confederation

MAYO Mexican American Youth Organization

MECHA Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan

mediero Sharecropper on northern frontier of colonial Mexico

mestizaje Process of physical blending of Indian and European

mestizo Literally "mixed"; a person of European and Indian ancestry

mexicano Usually a person from Mexico; also a person of Mexican descent in the United States Southwest

mojado Literally "wet"; one who enters the United States illegally, theoretically by swimming the Rio Grande River

mulato A person of European and African ancestry

NFWA National Farm Workers Association, founded by Cesar Chavez

Los Ninos Heroes Mexican cadets who resisted American troops at Chapultepec in 1847

nuevo mexicano Hispanic-Mexican inhabitant of area of New Mexico

pachuquismo Pejorative term for a "hip" life style within the barrio, usually followed by the young

partido "Sharecrop" system used in sheep culture on the Mexican frontier

PASO (PASSO) Political Association of Spanish-Speaking Organizations

patron Boss, patron; usually a large landowner

penitente Member of a fanatical Catholic religious group in New Mexico

peon(es) Worker, usually tied to the land

pinto Barrio term for a prison inmate

presidio Military fort

pueblo Township, village

ranchero Owner of a ranch; or related to ranching

rancho A rural property, often one on which cattle are raised

la raza Ethnic term for Spanish-speaking people, connoting a spirit of belonging and a sense of common destiny

La Raza Unida Political party founded in Texas in 1970

rebozo A long shawl or muffler worn (usually) by women

rico Literally a rich person; used in the Southwest to denote a member of the upper class

santero Carver of wooden statues of saints

sinarquismo A right-wing radical political philosophy

originating in Mexico with the Union Nacional Sinarquista

solar(es) Lot for town house; also town house

surumato Pejorative term, especially used in New Mexico for Mexican; origin uncertain

tejano Hispanic-Mexican inhabitant of Texas area

tertulia A social gathering for conversation or entertainment

tio taco Chicano pejorative version of "Uncle Tom"

TUUL Trade Union Unity League, Communist-affiliated labor organization

UFWOC United Farm Workers Organizing Committee, formed by merging NFWA and AWOC

UMAS United Mexican American Students

vaquero Mexican cowboy

vendido "Sell-out", one who betrays la raza

zoot-suiter Term used by Anglos to describe a person characterized by a certain style of dress and life common in the 1940s

– from *The Chicanos* by Matt S. Meier and Feliciano Rivera

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(B-broadcast, D-distributor)

Telco No:

693006 *'Viva La Causa'* (27 minutes) is a report on the Mexican and Filipino grape pickers' right to form a trade union. B-31 July '69. Thames TV/London in 'This Week' series. Producer Phillip Whitehead. Gerrard 0444 Mr. C. Towle (AB Pathe).

693614 (26 minutes). A profile of Caesar Chavez and the Farm Workers Union which is boycotting the California grape harvest in their struggle with the growers. B-28 August '69. Thames TV. Producer Phillip Whitehead.

703354 *'California's Migrant Workers'* (7 minutes 9", colour) shows migrant farm workers' housing conditions and social and medical facilities. Film includes interviews with a worker and clinic administrator. (3'9" English synch. sound). P-UPITN Roving Report 7031/A. Telex London 23915.

710657 *'Huelga'* (53 minutes, colour) discusses the migratory farm workers' strike which began in California in 1965 and investigates the dispute between grape growers and migrant workers, presenting both sides of the question, union activities, etc. D-McGraw-Hill, Shoppenhangers Road, Maidenhead, Berks.

711831 *'The Forgotten Families'* (29 minutes, colour) describes some of the problems facing migrant farm workers in the United States and the way in which communities try to meet their needs. D-National Audiovisual Center, Washington D.C. 20409.

711948 (14 minutes 18", colour). Tom Mangold reports from Southern California on the conditions under which Mexican migrant labourers work. Includes interview with Cesar Chavez of the United Farm Workers and with Mike Schulz of the Western Growers' Association. (Includes 19 feet CBS News archive film). B-22 April '71. BBC-1 in '24 Hours'.

712963 *'The Chicanos' (Los Chicanos)*. The discovery of the bodies of 25 men in California has also brought to light the misery of some 2,000,000 migrant workers who leave the South to work on farms further north. B-9 July '71 ORTF/1 in 'Objectifs'. P-E. de La Taille. Tx-Paris 20 002 Simsen

714025 *'... To The People'* (25 minutes, colour) is a three-part report on church financial support for minority groups. Part I examines new institutions created by Mexican-Americans in the Rio Grande Valley to improve their lot – a college, an organisation working with communities of farm workers, and a street theatre programme designed to help farm workers find a common identity. B-25 July '71 CBS News in 'Look Up and Live' series.

714271 *'Chicano'* (50 minutes, colour) examines the rapidly growing movement of young, militant Mexican-Americans. It focuses on Los Angeles which has the largest concentration of Mexicans outside of Mexico. Film includes a report on grievances, what is being done to alleviate them and views of some Mexican-Americans who oppose the militants. B-21 Oct. '71 CBS News 'Report'.

714877 *'Leaving Home Blues'* (60 minutes, colour). A report on the growing rural migration in America and the lack of government measures to deal with the problem. South Carolina, Nebraska and Texas were chosen as examples to illustrate the exodus of the young, the ravages of mechanisation, etc. B-27 Aug. '71 NBC News 'White Paper'. NBC International, 98 Petty France, London SW1.

720366 *'The Voice of La Raza'* (53 minutes, colour). Sponsored by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in America, it highlights the problems of Spanish-speaking minorities. Anthony Quinn visits communities in New York, Mexico and California. Includes a dramatised enactment of a Puerto Rican work predicament. P-William Greaves Productions, Inc., 254 West 54th Street, 8th Floor, New York, N.Y.

721961 *'Bitter Harvest' (Bittere Ernte)* (30 minutes, colour). A report on the Californian grape pickers and their leader Cesar Chavez just over a year after the five-year strike. (See 693006, 693614, 710657, 711948). B-1 June '72 ZDF/Mainz.

731456 *'Los Chicanos de Seattle'* (60 minutes, colour). Profile of some of Seattle's 40,000 Mexicans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans and Indians who make up the *Chicanos*. They explain that local, state and Federal government make them feel ashamed of their race and heritage. E-22 Mar. '73 KOMO/TV Seattle, Washington 98109.

750253 *'Illegal Aliens – The Gate Crashers'* (60 minutes, colour) reports on the estimated 7,000,000 immigrants living in the US without citizenship. Film shows Mexicans running across border at night into California and smugglers who profit by transporting immigrants (and narcotics) along similar routes. One such route is traced from Hong Kong to Montreal and along unguarded back roads into the US. B-3 Jan. '75 ABC News (in close-up), 7 West 66th Street, New York 10023, USA.

761119 *'Mexican ... and American'* (60 minutes, colour) looks at contributions made by Spanish-speaking generations to the Roman Catholic Church and the American republic. Filmed on location, it covers beginnings of the Aztec civilisation in Mexico, and mission churches in California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. Among prominent Mexican-Americans featured are the Most Rev. Robert F. Sanches, Archbishop of Albuquerque-Santa Fe (the first priest of Mexican-American descent to be named an Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Church in America). B-15 Feb. '76 NBC (in 'Under God'), 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10020, USA.

763960 *'The Hidden Minority'* (colour) examines Mexicans in California with an interview (in English) with Cesar Chavez, leader of the Mexican workers' union (80%) (15'). B-7 Aug. '76; BRT (in Panorama), Reyerslaan 52, B-1040 Brussels, Belgium.

772768 (colour) U. Kroeger focuses on the problem of illegal Mexican immigrants in the US. Film shows border scenes, arrests of immigrants, the Mexican quarters of Los Angeles, border patrols etc. (10'04"). B-24 June '77 ZDF (in 'Auslandsjournal'), Postfach 4040, 65 Mainz, W.Germany.

774853 (30 minutes, colour). The plight of illegal aliens in the US is explored by means of a portrait of two Mexican families living in the American Southwest. B-23 Oct. '77 ABC News (in 'Directions'). D-Columbia Pictures Television, 15250 Ventura Blvd., Sherman Oaks, CA 91403, USA.

781253 *'The Alien Game'* (52 minutes, colour) explores the economic and political realities that create and perpetuate a class of workers who have no protection and are victims of business interests. Film also examines the impact of enforcement practices of the border patrol on US citizens of Mexican descent. P-Moctesuma Esparza Productions. D-McGraw Hill Broadcasting, 2036 Lemoyne Avenue, Los Angeles, Ca 90026, USA (Won Silver Award, Virgin Islands 1977).

782460 *'Los Escondides/The Hidden Ones'* (30 minutes, colour) looks at the lives of illegal aliens, portraying two Mexican families living in the American southwest. B-30 April '78 ABC (in 'Issues and Answers'). D-Columbia Pictures TV, 15250 Ventura Blvd., Sherman Oaks, Ca 91403.

782662 *'From Mexico to the Promised Land' (Von Mexico ins gelobte Land)* (45 minutes, colour). Already a tenth of Mexico's population has emigrated illegally to the US and since forced deportation is not possible, President Carter is considering an amnesty for all illegal Mexican immigrants followed by a complete shut-down of the flow of illegal immigrants. Film also shows the life of illegal immigrants in America. B-3 July '78 Bavarian TV. D-Telepool, Sonnenstr.21, 8 Munich 15.

783355 *'The Unwanted'* shows several impoverished young Mexicans as they cross the US border. It focuses on the illegal immigration problems as it affects Mexican aliens, US citizens and residents of southern California. B-4 Aug. '78 WGBH/Boston, P-KCET, 4400 Sunset Drive, Los Angeles, Ca 90027

'Tijerina' (29 minutes, colour). Profile of the militant leader of Spanish Americans in New Mexico and of the people who follow him. B-1969 NBC 'First Tuesday' No. 5769/1. NBC International, Telex London 919311.

The above film list was provided by Richard S. Clark, TELCO, 19 Gurnells Road, Seer Green, Beaconsfield, Bucks. HP9 2XJ, UK.

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STAN STEINER was born in 1925 and lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico. He is the author of La Raza (1970), The Tiguas: the lost tribe of city Indians (1972), The Islands: the worlds of the Puerto Ricans (1974), The Vanishing White Man (1976), and Fusang: the Chinese who built America (1979). He has also edited Aztlan, an anthology of Mexican American literature, and Native American Writing for PEN. He has been a lecturer at the University of New Mexico and at Berkeley, and a guest Professor at the University of Paris, and has written for The New York Times, Washington Post, The New Republic, and The Nation.

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The map on page 4 is from 'The Mexican American People', The Free Press, Collier-Macmillan, 1970

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